

THE  
Female Duell

OR THE

MAIDENS COMBATE;

Being an exact Relation of two Maidens living near the Town of *Ware* in *Hartfordshire*, who being Enamoured on a young Man of the same Town, Challenged the Field of each other, and fought a Duell at single Rapier, with the whole manner and Circumstances thereof.

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*You young Men who with fighting Maids would we  
Come to the Town of Ware, you may be sped.*

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## The Female Combate.

**L**ove and Pease-porridge are too dangrous things to medle withal, the one breaks the Heart, the other the Belly; but Pease-porridge lasts not all the year long, whereas Love, like Strong Bear and Tobacco is never out of season; nor do we read in the Chronicles of much mischief done by Pease-porridge, whereas every Romance Play-book, nay the very Ballads themselves are stuf, yea stuf full as is a Cushion, with the sad and direful effects procured by Love.

Formerly I have warned young men to beware of being caught in *Cupid's Pinfold* by gazing on beautiful Maidens, who carry *Lime-twigs* in their faces, enough to ensnare any heart, if it be not armed *Cap-a-pe* with resolutions of disdain: for love oh this love it is such a thing a *Bedlamizes* a man, and makes him to wish himself any thing belonging to his Mistress; One desired he were a Saddle that his Mistress might ride a stride over him, quite forgetting that she uses to ride sidling upon a pinion. Another said it would not grieve him to be hanged if he might be strangled in his *Ladies garters* although she had be pist them; yea I know one that wished himself any Utensil belonging to his Mistress, although it were her Chamber-pot. Thus you see how this Love makes a man to unman himself, and proves himself a meer *Idiot* or *Coxcombe*. But when this passion is predominant in women, it commonly breaks forth into acts of violence, not onely to the tearing off of one anothers coyses, and scratching the face, but oftentimes to the endangering of each others lives, as may be seen by this example following.

In *Hartford-shire* is a Town called *Ware*, from whence came the Proverb that *Ware and Wades Mill are half worth London*, the meaning whereof is that the *Ware* in *London* is worth as much as the Houses and Lands there. But you will say what is this to the purpose? why *Tom Fool* did never any but speak



besides the purpose, but near this Town there lives at thisday a tall, proper, fout Square timber'd Man, whose Sir name for some reasons best known to our selves we will conceal, and only tell you his Christian name was *Humphry*. This *Humphry* was reputed to be a very good husband, and good husbands not dropping every day from the Clouds, caused two Maidens of the Town to be greatly enamour'd of him; whereof the one was named *Abigail*, and the other *Hannah*; of these two, *Abigail* was the handsomest for Physiognomy, but *Hannah* had most mony to her Portion: and therefore unless a Man had been born as wise as one of the *Sages of Greece*, how could he tell which to prefer, of beauty, or mony; but *Humphry* (a cunning Rogue) soon decid'd the business, and loved *Abigail* for the one, and *Hannah* for the other. Now you must know (or else you know nothing) that Rivals can never abide each other, and therefore *Hannah* jealous that *Abigail's* feature should prevail above her pelf, she boldly sent her this Challenge following.

*Hannah's Challenge to Abigail.*

*Mistress Mincks.*

Since thou depending on thy whitely look't face, so proudly weene'st that thou hast the full possession of *Humphry's* heart, so that there is not the least corner thereof reserved for me; know I think myself as good as thou, even every inch of me, and mean to make it good tria armis; meet me therefore (if thou darest) to morrow at eight of the Clock in the Evening, next Meadow to the Church-yard, where you shall find me with a single Rapier attending your coming to try by Duel who shall enjoy him; not doubting but the success thereof will be to me glorious, and shameful and ruinous to thy self.

*Hannah.*

*Abigail* having received this Challenge, fearing *Humphry* might be as soon drawn from loving her by *Hannah's* mony, as well as drawn to love her self for her beauty without mony, and having as stout a heart, as the other had a bold spirit, she resolutely returned her this answer following.

*Abi.*

*Abigails answer to Hannah.*

Mistress Blowze.

Who having got a little refined dirt in thy purse, art so elevated in conceit, as to scorn her who is thy equal in breeding, and much superior in Beauty; but to learn thee better manners, know I will attend thee at thy own time, Place and Weapon, as thou desirest, and doubt not but the justness of my cause shall be seconded with such success, as shall be to thee shame and reproach, and to me the enjoyment of my wishes and desires.

*Abigail.*

Thus Gentlemen you see what Love can do, make English Damselfs turn Amazonian Virago's, and instead of the Spanish needle handle the Bilbo-blade, from being Servitors in Venus Court, to turn Souldiers in Mars his Camp; yet by'r Lady this is more Gentle then for a man when he sets his affections upon a scornful Tit, to sit in a solitary place, pule, whine, wring the hands, and at last put finger in the eye and weep, far more ridiculous then a child that cries for two pieces of Bread and Butter, when the Belly will scarcely hold one.

*O Love thy intriguess I do desire*

*A Horse tis thought of such disease might dye.*

But to return to the matter, at such time as the bright Lamp of Heaven had whirled the appointed time about, Hannah was gotten into the Field with her killing Iron, where long she had not staid but thither likewise came Abigail with her weapon of destruction. But now O ye nine Muses, nay if there were thrice three times nine of you, I must invoke all your aids to describe the terribleness of this encounter; that of Clinias and Dametas, St. George and the Gyant, Bevis of Hampton and Ascapart, were but, Flea bites to this, for Jealousie had so enraged them with Fury that without staying the measuring of the length of each others Weapons, they fall to it, even as a hungry man would fall upon a Roasted Shoulder of Mutton, dealing their blows as thick and fast as Ceres Servants do in thrashing out the Golden Grain that brings in Bakers their Silver proffit. And now who could but expect that the issue of this Duel would be black and

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Tragical, when in the very nick or opportunity of time, *Humphry* who had been plodding about his business chanc'd to come by, who beholding naked Weapons brand sh't againt each other, it frighted him as much as the sight of a *Catch-pole* doth a *Debtor*, the looks of a *Hangman* doth a *Thief*, or the remembrance of *Hell* doth an *Usurer*; what to do in this business he could not tell, for of all exercises he lov'd not fighting, and had rather to die the death of a dog by hanging, then to have a *Sword* let out some of his blood and he die away with the sight of it. But at last fear which had long time stood Centinel at the Gates of his eyes, vanish away by hearing *Hannah* call *Abigail* by her name, saying *Abigail* yield thee, or by the *Paulchion* of *Mars*, I shall offer up thy heart blood upon my *Rapiers* point a sacrifice to *Cup'id*; But if thou wilt submit, and quit thy Love to *Humphry*, thou shalt find me then as cordial a friend as upon the refusal I am like to prove a mortal enemy.

*Humphry* therefore like a stout Souldier seeing the danger no greater by reason they were both his Friends, took courage and boldly went to them, desiring them to surcease, since every blow they gave each other was a wound to his poor heart, and therefore told them he would give them no worse counsel th'n upon such an occasion he would willingly take himself, which was, rather to argue it out by discourse then blows.

Being something perswaded by his words, but more by weariness with belabouring each other, they for a while made a pause; But when they came to a tongue combat, the bawling of the Lawyers at *Westminster-hall*, the noise of nine Mill-clappers, nor the roaring of the Lyons in the Tower of *London*, was not the ninth part comparable to them.

The clamour of their tongues, which like Bells that did not toll but rung out, brought a great congregation of people together, who stood wondring at them as the Birds do at an Owl by day light; O said a Fellow whose Arms had often commanded the Blow-handle, If Love be such a parlow thing to make folks fight, be-  
 hope my Daughter *Joan* will never be in Love so long as she has a hole in her Skin. Now mischief light on't said a *Malster* who looks like



like the Collier of *Croyden*, by being in his Kell hole, *This Love is as had a thing as the wellow they call Mats, who never walks abroad into the World, but he carries abundance of Plunderers at his heels.* This was the opinion these *Hobnails* had of Love, and well might they distrust him, for fear how the Poet himself doth characterize him.

*The pleasing Tyrant, sweet Captivity,  
The heavy lightness, serious vanity,  
The amorous fire, the merry sadness,  
The joyful sorrow, sober madness,  
Sighing singing, freezing frying,  
Laughing weeping, living dying, &c.*

With a number more Epithets which might be given it besides enough almost to fill a bushel bag. But to leave this discourse of Love and return to the Lovers, those pair of *Martial Virago's*, who with all the Rhetorick that could be used to them, would hardly be periwaded to put up their Weapons; nay when they could not kill one another with their Swords, they endeavour'd to do the same with their looks, sending such darts of disdain at each other, that had their eyes been as venomous as their tongues, they might have killed at a Furlongs distance.

*A Womans tongue being for a space kept under,  
When it breaks forth doth make a noise like Thunder.*

For Women most commonly are in extreams, either too willing, or too willful; too forward, or too froward; too courteous, or too coy, too friendly, or too feindly, the mean they always meanly account of; and as the Poet hath it.

*The best of Goods or else the worst of Evils,  
Glorious Angels, or else cursed Devils.*

But not to be longer in describing men they were in fighting this Duel, let it suffice to tell ye, that as neither were conquerors, so was neither of them conquer'd, and though none of them matcht to *Humphry*, yet was equally matcht in valour to each other. But this honour they attain'd, that though they came to that place singly, they were accompanied home in much triumph with great multitudes of people, some praising their courage, but most condemning their indiscretion in this matter.

And

And now your *English* Damsels who pretend your selves of the first form in *Cupid's* School, tell me which of you durst thus far engage or the obtaining of a Husband, and as Sir *Philip Sidney* says in his *Astrophell* and *Stella*.

*Durst loose your lives rather then loose your Loves*

But on the contrary, how do you seem coy, when your heart would perswade you to be kind, pushing away that with your little finger which you would willingly draw to you with your hand, carrying Ice in your Tongues by denial, when your hearts are all flames of fire, with desire; like *Hocus Pocus's*, a Man knows not where to have ye, for now ye will, and then you will not; being like wet Eels a Man is not sure of you, though he have ye by the taylor, in Dock, our Nettle; our Nettle, in Dock, having all, nay ten times more tricks than a dancing Mare.

*Being like unto Proteus, that can take  
What shape you please, and in an instant make,  
Your selves to anything, be that or this  
By voluntary Metamorphosis.*

But these *Pirages* were not of so changeable a temper, their Loves were more firmer fixt, then to be blown off with the Wind of Fancy, or like Womens *fucus* that melts off with the heat of the fire, they had resolved in their hearts, and would make it good with their hands, and if perswasions could not force love from each others hearts, they intended to let it out with their heart bloods.

Now which of these, or whether any of them both shall at last enjoy *Humphry*, and tye such a knot with their hands as they cannot untie with their teeth, 'tis time the Mother of truth that must bring all to light; for many judges he will fall off from both, for he being a cunning Youth may imagine that if they could handle their Weapons so well against each other, if he should marry one of them, she might perhaps bestow a cast of her office upon him, to the endangering of his going in the *Hen-peck Friggot* and being *Crow-trodden*. Which book (kind Reader) of the *Hen-peck Friggot* will very suddenly come forth, with many additions of such Persons as are *Hen-peck*, and of those that are *Crow-trodden*.

*Untill which time I take my leave of thee,  
Wishing that thou maist no such Person be.*

**FINIS**